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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC, WHA/EPSC, CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC KPAQ KMDR PREL AR IR HA CH
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAN, HAITI, AND CHINA; 2/19-22/10; BUENOS AIRES

SUMMARY

¶1. Opinion articles about U.S. policy regarding Iran, Haiti, and China filled weekend newspapers in Argentina. The Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Buenos Aires warned against Iran's increasing influence in Latin America, which is "legitimizing" Iran's President. Another article strongly praised U.S. relief efforts in Haiti, while Argentina's largest-circulation daily printed USAID Administrator Shah's opinion article highlighting U.S. assistance. Additionally, a flurry of opinions dramatized the strained tensions between China and the U.S. End summary.

IRAN'S INCREASING SHADOW IN LATIN AMERICA

¶2. Sergio Widder, Simon Wiesenthal Center's Director for Latin America, wrote an opinion article (2/19) in center-right Perfil headlined "Iran's shadow grows in Latin America." Widder claims there is a "bloc of countries (allied to Iran) seeking to export the Iranian revolution," with Bolivia, Venezuela, and Nicaragua forming the core. Widder writes that Venezuela's support for Iran included obstructing an investigation into the 1994 AMIA bombing in Buenos Aires after Argentina requested the extradition of former Iranian officials in connection with the investigation. The article also voices opposition to Brazilian-Iranian cooperation, which is "legitimizing" the government of Iran's President Ahmadinejad.

http://www.perfil.com/contenidos/2010/02/19/n_oticia_0044.html

U.S. EFFORTS IN HAITI

¶3. Praising the "comprehensive approach and the determination" of U.S. actions in Haiti, Gilberto Rodrigues opined in Perfil (2/21) that Washington regained an image of leadership in "good causes" by "delivering a global message." Rodrigues highlights the strong mobilization of non-governmental organizations in the U.S. that are helping Haiti's reconstruction. However, Rodrigues also observes that due to the U.S., MINUSTAH "no longer plays the main role" in Haiti, and hopes that this change does not make Haiti "a new battleground for hemispheric hegemony."

http://www.perfil.com/contenidos/2010/02/21/n_oticia_0011.html

¶14. Clarin, Argentina's largest circulation daily, published (2/22) USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah's opinion article detailing the actions of the U.S. in Haiti.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/22/opinion/o-02144991.htm>

INCREASED CONCERNS REGARDING U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

¶15. Proclaiming that "Chinese fury starts new Cold War," Perfil published an article on 2/20 saying China "firmly condemned Obama's meeting with the Dalai Lama." Quoting Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu as saying the Washington meeting was "an intervention in Chinese internal affairs" and "hurt the China's feelings," the article notes Zhaoxu asked Washington to take steps to "eliminate the damaging" effects of the summit. In separate article with the headline "The Fourth World War," Perfil says it will be difficult to predict "how this new diplomatic row might end."

<http://www.diarioperfil.com.ar/edimp/0445/article.php?art=19994&ed=0445>

¶16. On 2/20, Clarin's correspondent in Beijing says Obama tried to downplay the Dalai Lama visit, by not receiving him in the Oval Office and not giving a press conference after the meeting. Clarin notes "those efforts were not enough" and China issued "tense statements," including a formal complaint to U.S. Ambassador to China Jon Huntsman.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/20/elmundo/i-02143973.htm>

¶17. An opinion article in Clarin (2/20) referring to a "new bipolar" world states growing frictions between Beijing and Washington have "narrowed the possibility of synergy between both giants." The article, signed by journalist Marcelo Cantelmi, claims these tensions are the initial signs of a "phenomenal global readjustment," which has been sped up by the economic crisis. It highlights the "dropping relative strength of the U.S.," which generates conflicting signs for other interests close to the conflict, such as Iran and Israel. Additionally, the article quotes a story in The Economist as saying the U.S. "is unprepared to negotiate from a position in which it lacks superiority."

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/20/opinion/o-02143967.htm>

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